

Risk Factors

The following lists are representative of information found in suicide literature. While no list is all inclusive, those included below serve to summarize an enormous amount of information.

The Four Most Common Factors in Youth Suicide*

- Depression, mood disorder, anxiety
- Conduct disorder
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Isolation

*These do not cause suicide, but when many factors are present, these will make a difference.

Family Risk Factors

- ☐ Family history of suicide (especially a parent)
- ☐ Changes in family structure through death, divorce, re-marriage, etc.
- ☐ Family involvement in alcoholism
- ☐ Lack of strong bonding/attachment within the family, withdrawal of support
- ☐ Unrealistic parental expectations
- ☐ Violent, destructive parent-child interactions
- ☐ Inconsistent, unpredictable parental behavior
- ☐ Depressed, suicidal parents
- ☐ Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse

Behavioral Risk Factors

- ☐ One or more prior suicide attempt(s)
- ☐ Alcohol/drug abuse
- ☐ Aggression/rage/defiance
- ☐ Running away
- ☐ School failure, truancy
- ☐ Fascination with death, violence, Satanism
- ☐ A detailed plan for how, when, where
- ☐ Friends not telling adults about friends who may be suicidal

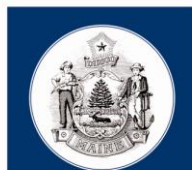
Environmental Risk Factors

- ☐ Access to lethal means
- ☐ Frequent mobility
- ☐ Religious conflicts
- ☐ Social isolation/alienation or turmoil
- ☐ Exposure to a suicide of a peer
- ☐ Anniversary of someone else's suicide
- ☐ Incarceration/loss of freedom
- ☐ High levels of stress; pressure to succeed
- ☐ Over-exposure to violence in mass media

Personal Risk Factors

- ☐ Mental illness/psychiatric condition
- ☐ Depression/anxiety/Bi-polar
- ☐ Poor impulse control
- ☐ Confusion/conflict about sexual identity
- ☐ Loss of significant relationships
- ☐ Compulsive, extreme perfectionism
- ☐ Lack skills to manage decision-making, conflict, anger, problem solving, distress, etc.
- ☐ Loss (or perceived loss) of identity, status
- ☐ Feeling powerless, hopeless, helpless
- ☐ Victim of sexual abuse
- ☐ Pregnancy or fear of pregnancy
- ☐ Fear of humiliation

Maine's Statewide Crisis Hotline – 1-888-568-1112



Maine Center for Disease
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Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner